REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

These remarks are made in response to the Office Action of June 23, 2008 (Office Action). As this response is timely filed within the 3-month shortened statutory period, no fee is believed due. However, the Examiner is expressly authorized to charge any deficiencies to Deposit Account No. 50-0951.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103

In the Office Action, Claims 1, 4-12, 14-15, 18-26, 28-29, and 31-32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,067,548 to Cheng and U.S. Patent 6,539,232 to Hendrey, *et al.* (hereinafter Hendrey).

Although Applicants respectfully disagree with the rejections, Applicants have amended Claims 1, 9, 26, and 28. Applicants have cancelled Claims 2-3, 7-8, 10-25, 27, and 29-32. However, Applicants are not conceding that the remaining claims as originally formulated or the cancelled claims fail to present patentable subject matter. The amendments and cancellations are solely for the purpose of expediting prosecution. Accordingly, neither the amendments nor cancellations should be interpreted as the surrender of any subject matter, and Applicants expressly reserve the right to present the original version of any of the amended claims in any future divisional or continuation applications from the present application.

As discussed herein, the claim amendments are fully supported throughout the Specification. No new matter has been introduced by the claim amendments.

Aspects of Applicants' Invention

It may be helpful to reiterate certain aspects of Applicants' invention prior to addressing the cited references. One embodiment of the invention, as typified by amended Claim 1, is a method for analyzing relationships between individuals.

The method can include obtaining organizational relationship data based upon an organization structure and recording the organizational relationship data in a relationship data store; obtaining project-based relationship data based upon project-specific collaborations and recording the project-based relationship data in the relationship data store; and obtaining social relationship data based upon social interactions and recording the social relationship data in the relationship data store. Relationships can be revealed or altered dynamically based on detected communication events between the individuals.

The method also can include receiving a relationship inquiry; querying the relationship data recorded in the relationship data store; generating a query result to the inquiry based upon relationships from multiple relationship categories; and graphically illustrating the query result in at least one of a unified relationship chart and a relationship linkage chart. The unified relationship chart can illustrate relationships among individuals using data from at least two different relationship categories. The relationship linkage chart can illustrate at least one relationship linkage including a chain of relationships that connect two individuals.

See, e.g., Specification, paragraphs [0054] to [0059]; see also Figs. 1-3.

The Claims Define Over The Prior Art

The present invention provides a method for managing relationships, more specifically the relationships between individuals in an organization. One of the particularly unique aspects of the present invention is the capability for dynamically capturing many different types of interactions between individuals in an organization to thereby create a holistic view of relationships. The interactions include, but are not limited to, those implied by the formal organizational structure, projects, formal and informal social interactions (communications and communities). The present invention provides the ability to utilize filters in communications systems such as instant messaging, email, and telephone systems to capture informal organization relationships between members of the organization. In addition, the present invention assigns a number indicating the "strength" between these relationships.

Various aspects of the invention, as reflected in the features presented in the claims, include:

- The relationships forged during projects represent a significant part of the total relationships in an organization, in addition to the formal organizational structure. This is particularly true for a cross matrix organization. The present invention incorporates on-going, dynamic types of relationships into the mix to create a holistic view of relationships in an organization.
- The communication events (e-mails, phone calls, instant messaging, etc.) between individuals represent another type of on-going, dynamic relationship. Relationships can be revealed or altered dynamically based on the detected communication events between individuals.
- The unified relationship chart, together with the linkage strength, and relationship categories, can be used to find the linkage between two individuals with query criteria containing relationship categories, and to aid the formation of project teams or measure the degree of collaboration between the individuals in the organization.

Cheng describes recording relationships based on a structure with three components in the organizational model, namely the organizations, members, and virtual links. The virtual links enable the modeling of dynamic roles such that policies regarding various operations over the work objects can be defined and maintained. Cheng provides a tool to model an enterprise for collaborative computing including system architecture and user interfaces.

While Cheng discloses a system for recording relationships based on organizational structure, Cheng's focus is on the creation of the model and attributes associated with that model. It would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to apply Cheng's method to analyzing relationships in an organization, incorporating the project-specific relationships, and dynamically establish or altering relationships based on the detected communication events between individuals.

While Cheng discloses the use of attributes and organization structures, Cheng does not disclose a relationship weight engine which can be used to dynamically establish or alter relationships based on projects and communication events between individuals as in the present invention. Also, Cheng does not disclose relationship categories. Further, Cheng does not provide a refined relationship query based on the relationship categories.

In Col 19, Cheng discloses a system architecture and user interface to model an enterprise for collaborative computing in the context of "workflow" engines and the leveraging of attributes for calculation of appropriate resources to handle work. However, Cheng does not disclose the integration of a model with communication events, which is one of the unique aspects reflected in the claims.

Hendrey discloses a method and system for selectively connecting proximately-located telecommunications units. Hendrey is focused on determining best routes for connecting appropriate telecommunications infrastructure and does not deal with application system architecture or the need for determining organizational relationships for effective collaboration. While Cheng is focused on managing relationships between people, Hendrey is focused on managing relationships between telecommunications units. It is not obvious how these inventions relate to one another or how affinity values for best paths for telecommunications infrastructure apply to organizational relationship systems or models.

Accordingly, the cited references, alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest each and every element of Claims 1 and 26, as amended. Applicants therefore respectfully submit that amended Claims 1 and 26 define over the prior art. Furthermore, as each of the remaining claims depends from Claims 1 or 26 while reciting additional features, Applicants further respectfully submit that the remaining claims likewise define over the prior art.

Applicants thus respectfully request that the claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103 be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Applicants believe that this application is now in full condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested. Applicants request that the Examiner call the undersigned if clarification is needed on any matter within this Amendment, or if the Examiner believes a telephone interview would expedite the prosecution of the subject application to completion.

Respectfully submitted,

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